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2 February 1965

Subject: Principles to Guide the Preparation of  
a New NRO Agreement

1. The acquisition of intelligence by overhead reconnaissance is a responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence. Satellite photography makes a most important input into the intelligence inventory. The DCI in discharging his statutory responsibilities for producing estimates concerning the security of the United States must direct this intelligence-acquiring facility to meet his needs. To do this the DCI, directly or through subordinates responsible to him, and with the continuing advice of the United States Intelligence Board, should determine the frequency of satellite missions, the ephemeris or track for such missions, the targets and the priority in which they must be treated, and the control of the satellite when in orbit to insure coverage of the targets and therefore the acquisition of information considered essential by the DCI. Among other things, this means that the DCI should have control and direction of the Satellite Operations Center.

2. The Department of Defense is the proper authority of the Government because of its facilities, existing organization, and available funds, to coordinate all satellite missions and carry out all satellite launches and recoveries. This involves providing launching and recovery facilities; the provision of boosters, spacecraft and payloads assigned to be developed by the DOD, including the organization to accomplish the necessary inspections, checkouts, countdown, etc., to insure reliability of the system. In cases where any major component of a system, i.e., booster, payload or Piggy Back Sensor is assigned for development to another element of the U.S. Government, DOD as coordinator of the system will recognize that procurement and technical direction of the major component of the system will be the undivided responsibility at all times of the Government element designated for its development. There is no interference, overlap or gap between these defined responsibilities as set forth in paragraph 1, above. 25X1

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3. The DCI, with the continuing advice of the United States Intelligence Board, must establish the criteria for new and improved satellite systems, calling upon the most able resources available to the Government to meet such requirements. The Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense should make the final judgment of the system or systems needed to meet established requirements, and after carefully and independently reviewing proposed systems as originated by elements of the National Reconnaissance Program, should call upon the designated (by the ExCom) organization to further the development in stages in a manner consistent with careful judgment concerning the state of the art on the one hand, and the need for expeditious pursuit to meet intelligence needs. Development should be pursued by the designated organization to include research, development, experimentation and the production of the required spacecraft, cameras, reentry vehicles, etc., all of which should be brought together by that agency for mating with the other components of the system under DOD coordination.

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